

**Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Smith, March 9, 1801,
Partly Illegible, The Works of Thomas Jefferson in
Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited
by Paul Leicester Ford.**

TO SAMUEL SMITH J. MSS.

Washington, Mar. 9, 1801.

Dear Sir, —By the time you receive this, you will have been at home long enough I hope to take a view of the possibilities, and of the arrangements which may enable you so to dispose of your private affairs, as to take a share in those of the public, and give your aid as Secretary of the Navy. If you can be added to the administration I am forming it will constitute a magistracy entirely possessed of the public confidence, that I shall [*faded*]. There is nothing to which a nation is not equal when it pours all its energies & zeal into the hands of those to whom they confide the direction of their force. You will bring us the benefit of adding in a considerable degree the acquiescence at least of the leaders who have hitherto opposed. Your geographical situation too is peculiarly advantageous, and will favor the policy of drawing our naval resources towards the states from which their benefits and production may be extended equally to all parts. But what renders it a matter not only of desire to us, but permit me to say, of moral duty in you, is that if you refuse where are we to find a substitute? You know that the knowledge of naval matters in this country is confined entirely to persons who are under other absolutely disqualifying circumstances. Let me then, dear sir, entreat you to join in conducting the affairs of our country, and to prove by consequences that the views they entertain in the change of their servants are not to be without effect. In short if you refuse I must abandon from necessity, what I have been so falsely charged with doing from choice, the expectation

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of procuring to our country such benefits as may compensate the expenses of their navy. I hope therefore you will accede to the proposition. Everything shall be yielded which may accommodate it to your affairs. Let me hear from you favorably & soon. Accept assurances of my high & friendly consideration and esteem.